

UNITED STATES SUPPORTS HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY WORLDWIDE

WASHINGTON, APRIL 6 – U.S. efforts to advance human rights around the world are outlined in Supporting Human Rights and Democracy: The U.S. Record 2005-2006, released by the Department of State April 5.

The congressionally mandated annual report, a companion to the State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, recaps the actions and programs the United States has taken to end human-rights abuses noted in the country reports.

The report summarizes the U.S. strategy in advancing freedom around the world, so that people will be able to see in one document what the United States is doing to support democracy and human rights, Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Barry F. Lowenkron told the Washington File April 3.

Supporting Human Rights and Democracy addresses U.S. efforts in 95 countries and demonstrates the link between the findings of the annual country reports -- a comprehensive, accurate account on human rights conditions around the world -- and the efforts by the United States to help remedy the human-rights abuses identified in the reports.

The report puts words into practice, an approach that has become a hallmark of U.S. foreign policy in the area of international human rights, according to Lowenkron. In the report, the United States looks at human-rights reporting not merely as a record of past performance but as a guide for future improvement.

The report is the product of cooperation among regional and functional bureaus of the U.S. Department of State and missions abroad, the U.S. departments of Justice, Commerce, Treasury and Labor, and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Congress legislatively mandated that the department report on actions taken by the U.S. government to encourage respect for human rights in countries in which there are incidents of extra-judicial killings, torture or other serious violations of human rights. The publication reflects an ongoing dialogue between Washington and U.S. posts overseas to identify promising programs that support the goals of democracy and human rights.

In fiscal year 2005, the United States budgeted \$1.4 billion for human rights and democracy programming. The Millennium Challenge Account, which links a country's eligibility for poverty alleviation funding to good governance, fosters democratic reform efforts through targeted development assistance. (See Millennium Challenge Account (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/mca.html).)

The report illustrates that U.S support for human rights and democracy is not a once-a-year task to report on the state of human rights in countries; it is, rather, a day-to-day effort by the United States to encourage countries to build stronger democratic systems and greater respect for human rights, Lowenkron said.

“What comes through in the report is that there are individual voices in all the 95 countries. Some of these voices are weak; some of them are strong; some of them are stronger. The United States does not ‘impose democracy.’ We hear these voices, and we try to respond to them,” Lowenkron said.

(See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/Archive/2006/Mar/08-930887.html>).)

The full text (<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/shrd/2005/>) of the report is available on the State Department's Web site.

=====

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

GR/ 2006

Note: A Bangla translation of this article is also available from the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section (Tel: 8813440-4, Fax: 9881677; e-mail: DhakaPA@state.gov; Website: [http:// dhaka.usembassy.gov](http://dhaka.usembassy.gov))